

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 1269

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EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: CI, SCUL
SUBJECT: ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL: MEETING WITH MINISTER OF
EDUCATION

REF: STATE 46460

1. SUMMARY: EDUCATION MINISTER REFUSES TO RECOGNIZE NEGOTIATIONS REGARDING ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL NOW GOING ON THROUGH CHILEAN EMBASSY WASHINGTON. FINDS POSITION OF HOLY CROSS ORDER UNCOMPROMISING, AND SHOWS NO SIGN OF APPRECIABLE GIVE ON HIS SIDE. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING MY COURTESY CALL ON MINISTER OF EDUCATION ADMIRAL CASTRO MARCH 14, I EXPRESSED HOPE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH I HAD UNDERSTOOD WERE PROCEEDING IN WASHINGTON WITH RESPECT TO ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL PROBLEM WOULD SOON BE MOVED TO A SATISFACTORY CONCLUSION. CASTRO REACTED QUITE SHARPLY. HE SAID HOLY CROSS ORDER HAD REJECTED ALL HIS PROPOSALS, INCLUDING HIS PROPOSAL REGARDING COMPOSITION OF SCHOOL COUNCIL, AND THIS DESPITE FACT THAT HE HAD OFFERED REPRESENTATION TO CARDINAL SILVA AS MEANS OF INSURING CONTINUANCE OF CHURCH INTEREST AND AVOIDING CONTROVERSY WITH CHURCH.

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EM CASTRO THEN SHOWED ME TELEGRAM HE HAD SENT TO FATHER

LEWERS FEBRUARY 18 STATING THAT IN AS MUCH AS THERE HAD BEEN NO AGREEMENT ON PROPOSALS PUT FORWARD BY BOTH SIDES, MATTER REMAINED UNSETTLED. TELEGRAM ALSO STATED THAT NEGOTIATIONS COULD NOT BE CARRIED ON WITH CHILEAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON BUT ONLY WITH MINISTER IN SANTIAGO.

4. I EXPRESSED SOME ASTONISHMENT AT THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS, CONCERNING WHICH I TOLD MINISTER WE HAD NOT BEEN INFORMED. WHILE THIS WAS NOT A GOVERNMENTAL MATTER AT THIS STAGE, I NOTED, CONTINUING DISPUTE WITH HOLY CROSS ORDER ABOUT FUTURE OF SCHOOL WAS BOUND TO RESULT IN UNFORTUNATE PUBLICITY WHICH COULD ONLY MAKE OUR TASK MORE DIFFICULT. I THEREFORE HOPED THAT WHEN FATHER WARNER OF HOLY CROSS ORDER ARRIVED IN SANTIAGO IN NEXT FEW DAYS, MINISTER WOULD SEE HIM. CASTRO AGREED TO DO SO, THOUGH NOT WITHOUT COMMENTING THAT FATHER WARNER "SEEMED VERY YOUNG."

5. COMMENT. I AM NOT SANGUINE THAT GALLAGHER/WARNER MEETING WITH CASTRO WILL BE PRODUCTIVE GIVEN CONTINUING RIGIDITY ON BOTH SIDES. HOWEVER, IT IS PLAIN THAT CASTRO INSISTS THAT DISCUSSIONS MUST BE HELD WITH HIM IN SANTIAGO, NOT USING AMBASSADOR HEITMANN AS INTERMEDIARY. I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE, AS REPORTED SANTIAGO 0999, THAT BEST POSSIBILITY OF FINDING A SOLUTION IS HOLY CROSS USE OF CARDINAL AS NEGOTIATOR. END COMMENT.

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